

Meeting of the Historical Architectural Review Board
April 27, 2006

The Falls Church Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) convened its monthly meeting at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 27, 2006. Present were Chair Charles Moore, vice Chair Linda Valentino, Secretary Cynthia Kuhn, and members Allen Greenberg and Carol Jackson along with city staff liaison Debra Gee.

The HARB took up Item 2, Public Hearing on 310 Grove Avenue, [Real Property Code 51-215-022] by Walter Petersen and Madeline Smith, owners, to construct a one-story addition of 6'9" x 7'9", to install screens and a roof on an existing brick patio, and to construct a roofed deck of 6'6" x 16'. All materials of the new construction to match the existing structure as closely as possible. Ms. Gee prepared a detailed memorandum on the proposal, dated April 20, 2006, which was circulated to the HARB. Mr. Petersen explained that the plans extend the house area approximately six feet on the first floor and enclose the back end of the house, which is not visible from the street. Ms. Smith added that the work involves some foundation repair.

The meeting was then opened to the public. There being no one wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed. Mr. Moore then led the HARB through a reviewed the proposed changes as they addressed the city's design guidelines, following the memorandum prepared by Ms. Gee. The HARB concurred with the memorandum in its entirety. Ms. Valentino moved and Mr. Greenberg seconded approval of the plans as presented and the motion passed unanimously.

The HARB then took up Item 3A, Ordinance T06-05, Pipestem Lots. Ms. Gee provided a briefing of discussions between city staff and Council about discontent in the City over development of pipestem lots as they break up the grid in existing neighborhoods. The council's proposed ordinance was drafted as the most stringent recommendation possible. Ms. Gee further said the current sentiment was to put some restrictions on pipestem lots but not to completely eliminate them. The ordinance is due for second reading on May 22, 2006, and the HARB has been asked to comment if so desired. A brief discussion resulted in the desire to compose a letter to council expressing the HARB's concerns that such subdivisions have the potential of impacting protected properties and the Council should consider giving HARB review of any proposed development on such lots and further that if the council wishes to limit such lots on historic properties it might consider the incentive of offering tax relief to owners of lots that could be subdivided by right. Ms. Kuhn agreed to draft a letter summarizing these concerns for the HARB's review and comment and Ms. Gee agreed to circulate the final document to Council prior to second reading of the ordinance.

The HARB then took up Item 3B: Update on the Preservation Partners Task Force. Mr. Moore reported that meetings had been proceeding and the task force anticipated it would have a number of recommendations on how to improve the city's Historic and Cultural Conservation Ordinance. Discussion were ongoing about securing Certified Local Government Historic District designation, which would allow review of

everything in specific districts. Ms. Gee added that the task force was considering a series of community meetings to share its thoughts and recommendations in hopes of generating citizen support in advance of any proposal to council.

Under Item 3C, Outstanding Issues, Ms. Gee reported that 115 E Jefferson Street is currently for sale, a protected property, even though the Traceries Report found it to be a new building since the original structure burned down. The front of the building is vinyl clad and building permits only date back to 1975. The question is whether the property is still protected. If it is, should it be decertified and, if so, how would that be done? Ms. Gee said the staff position is that the building's status is unclear and that it is incumbent on the owner to prove that it burned down and that the city should then decide what process should be followed going forward in terms of protected status.

It also was reported that the protected property at 409 S. West Street continues to be imperiled as a result of non-repair following a significant fire. Mr. Moore agreed to write a letter to the building officials indicating the HARB's concern that this property might be considered 'demolition by neglect,' under the Ordinance, and asking that if this is the case, how should the HARB proceed.

The HARB then took up the minutes of the January 26, 2006 meeting. Ms. Valentino moved and Mr. Greenberg seconded adoption and the motion was approved unanimously.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia G. Kuhn, Secretary